



One Hundred Years Ago, On December 9, 1839, The Illinois Legislature Met In Springfield For The First Time. Abraham Lincoln Was A Member Of The Lower House.



The Second Presbyterian Church At Springfield,  
Where The Lower House Met.



not to M 1939



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In all forms of government the people is the true legislator,

Burke

**S**INCE July 1839, the State Government of Illinois was functioning at Springfield. Later that year the courts met here and on December 9, 1839, the second session of the Eleventh General Assembly convened for the first time in Springfield. The State House on the public square was still in the course of construction and almost a year was to elapse before the governmental departments could take up their abode there. All the churches in Springfield were called upon to meet the emergency for housing the separate departments. The Methodist Church was employed by the Senate or upper house, while the House of Representatives held forth in the Second Presbyterian Church.

In the lower house, the House of Representatives, our hero, Abraham Lincoln took his seat, a ceremony that he had performed five times before during past sessions at the old seat of government in Vandalia. The Second Presbyterian Church originally stood at what is now 219 South Fourth Street in the heart of modern Springfield. The site is marked with a bronze tablet that tells this story:

**ON THIS SITE STOOD  
THE SECOND  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
IN WHICH THE FIRST SESSION  
OF THE ILLINOIS HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES MET 1839-1840  
AFTER THE REMOVAL OF THE  
CAPITAL FROM VANDALIA.  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
WAS A MEMBER OF THAT  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.**

In the House with Abraham Lincoln were many men with whom he was to be closely associated in the future, as well as men who were to leave an indelible mark upon the history of the state. Edward D. Baker, close friend of Lincoln, whose name was later given to Lincoln's second born child. John J. Hardin, who with Baker, Stuart and Lincoln made up the most powerful quartet in Illinois Whig circles. William B. Archer, who in 1856 placed Lincoln's name in nomination for vice-president at the first Republican National Nominating Convention at Philadelphia. Here too, sat, John Calhoun, the man who gave Lincoln his start as a surveyor, as well as Jess K. Dubois, close personal friend of Lincoln and one of the organizers of the party that put him in power. In the Senate sat O. H. Browning, Quincy dandy, advisor and critic alike of Lincoln's presidential administration.

The array of talent, youthful perhaps, but ambitious indeed, with which Lincoln sat and endeavored to legislate the needs of the frontier state was a significant sign of things to come. This environment, composed of men of high legal and political ability, was greatly responsible for the lessons Lincoln learned and used during his presidential years.

THEODORE S. CHARRNEY

The cachet symbolic of this event is a picture of the Second Presbyterian Church where the House of Representatives met. Prepared by the Poor RICHARD PRESS, 5053 Montana Street, Chicago, Illinois.

